

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

A SYNTYPE OF *PEROMYSCUS MANICULATUS*  
*NEBRASCENSIS* (COUES)

By J. KNOX JONES, JR., AND B. MURSALOĞLU

The name *Peromyscus maniculatus nebrascensis* was originally proposed by Elliot Coues (in Coues and Allen, Bull. U. S. Geol. Surv. Territories, 11:79, 1877) in synonymy under *Hesperomys leucopus sonoriensis* as "*Hesperomys sonoriensis* var. *nebrascensis*." Coues credited the name to Baird, but the latter employed it as a nomen nudum, and *nebrascensis* has since been credited to Coues (see Jones, Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, 71: 107-111, 1958, for a review of the history), although he obviously did not intend his usage of the name as an original description. Subsequent revisers designated "Deer Creek, Nebr." [= Wyoming], from which Coues (*op. cit.*: 80) listed two specimens (U. S. National Museum nos. 4310-11), as the type locality of *nebrascensis*, thereby establishing the two specimens from Deer Creek as syntypes. One of us (Jones) searched unsuccessfully several years ago in the collections of the U. S. National Museum for the specimens concerned and concluded that they probably were no longer in existence (*op. cit.*: 109). Subsequently, one of the specimens from Deer Creek was discovered among the contents of a routine loan of "Nebraskan" mammals from the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard, and it is this specimen that is here discussed.

The specimen (now MCZ 5528) has four different labels attached to the left hind leg. One, a faded blue label that appears to be the original, bears printed across the top, "Expl. head waters, Missouri, Yellowstone. Capt. Reynolds, U.S.A.," and in the lower right hand corner, "Dr. F. V. Hayden." Handwritten in ink between the two is "Deer Creek January 19th 1860." The back of the label bears two numbers, "7" and "80." The latter is the original field number of the specimen, but we do not know the significance of the other. A second label bears essentially the same printed information as the first, along with "Deer Creek, Nebraska," printed in the lower left hand corner. This label also bears the date,

the original number, 80, and the U.S. National Museum number, 4310. The third is the regular MCZ specimen label and the fourth simply repeats the MCZ number, 5528.

The skin was well prepared and, considering its age, is in excellent condition; no external measurements are listed, nor is the sex indicated. The skull is broken and some parts are missing. The anterior portion is fairly complete except that the lateral anterior margin of the right nasal is missing as are the anterior portions of the left nasal and premaxillary. Both zygoma are missing save for a part of the maxillary and squamosal arms on each side. The entire portion of the skull posterior to the parietals dorsally, posterior to the squamosal arms of the zygoma laterally, and posterior to about midway along the mesopterygoid fossa ventrally is missing, save for a disassociated piece of the basioccipital. Each ramus is incomplete, but the left one lacks only the angular process. The teeth

TABLE 1. Cranial measurements of the syntype of *Peromyscus maniculatus nebrascensis*, and of recently acquired specimens of the subspecies *P. m. nebrascensis* and *P. m. luteus*.

CATALOGUE NUMBER OR NUMBER OF SPECIMENS AVERAGED, AND SEX	OCCIPITONASAL LENGTH	LENGTH OF NASALS	ZYGOMATIC BREADTH	LEAST INTERORBITAL CONSTRUCTION	LENGTH OF ROSTRUM	LENGTH OF INCISIVE FORAMINA	DEPTH OF SKULL	ALVEOLAR LENGTH OF MAXILLARY TOOTH-ROW
<i>Peromyscus maniculatus nebrascensis</i> , syntype								
MCZ 5528, ?	—	10.5	—	3.9	9.8	5.3	—	3.8
Converse and Natrona counties, Wyoming								
Average 10 (5 ♂, 5 ♀)	25.6*	10.6	13.4	4.1*	10.1	5.5	9.2*	3.9
Minimum	24.8	10.1	12.8	4.0	9.6	5.1	9.0	3.6
Maximum	26.9	11.2	13.6	4.4	10.5	5.8	9.7	4.2
Sioux County, Nebraska								
Average 25 (15 ♂, 10 ♀)	25.6	10.6	13.6	3.9	10.0	5.5	9.2	4.0
Minimum	24.3	10.2	13.0	3.7	9.3	5.1	8.6	3.6
Maximum	26.5	11.5	14.3	4.3	10.3	5.9	9.9	4.3
<i>Peromyscus maniculatus luteus</i> , Cherry County, Nebraska								
Average 20 (11 ♂, 9 ♀)	24.5	9.9	13.3	4.0	9.4	5.2	9.0	3.8
Minimum	23.3	9.5	12.6	3.7	8.9	4.8	8.8	3.6
Maximum	25.5	10.8	13.7	4.2	10.1	4.6	9.3	4.3

\* 9 specimens

show moderate wear. A label in the vial with the skull bears the notation "from Boston Soc. Nat. Hist.," indicating that the specimen was deposited in that collection prior to its acquisition by the Museum of Comparative Zoology.

Osgood (N. Amer. Fauna, 28:79, 1909), who did not recognize Coues' description as valid (but instead regarded *nebrascensis* of Coues as a nomen nudum), assigned one of the two original specimens from Deer Creek (possibly the one here under discussion) to his *Peromyscus maniculatus luteus*, with geographic distribution on the Sand Hills of Nebraska and adjacent areas to the east of the range of *P. m. nebrascensis*. The dorsum of MCZ 5528 is tawny ochraceous differing from the buffy gray color of typical *nebrascensis*, but differing also from the ochraceous buff color of *luteus*. We cannot explain with certainty the difference in color between the syntype of *nebrascensis* and specimens taken in recent years from the vicinity of the type locality, but probably it relates to post-mortem changes in color ("foxing"). It should be noted, however, that populations of *P. m. nebrascensis* from mountainous areas in southern Wyoming average slightly more reddish dorsally than populations from adjacent arid plains. The place on Deer Creek from which the syntypes came lies only approximately 20 miles northeastward from the Laramie Mountains, where slightly reddish-colored specimens of *nebrascensis* have been obtained, and it is conceivable that the syntype reflects relationship with the nearby montane populations of the subspecies. The measurable cranial dimensions of the skull of MCZ 5528 (Table 1) are slightly smaller than the average for *nebrascensis*, but are well within the range of variation found in that subspecies.

In summary, the two specimens from Deer Creek, Wyoming, the restricted type locality of *Peromyscus maniculatus nebrascensis*, that were listed by Coues (*loc. cit.*) were previously thought to be no longer in existence. One of these specimens (formerly USNM 4310, now MCZ 5528) has been found. It differs from specimens of *P. m. nebrascensis* taken in recent years in being more reddish dorsally, probably owing to post-mortem changes in color; available cranial measurements, however, provide no basis for doubting its origin or identity.